

## Pet Safety for the Holidays

*We often forget how stressful and sometimes dangerous the holidays can be for our pets. Hopefully this list of tips will keep both our pets, and us, safer and more relaxed during the busiest times.*

Many of the things we just take for granted during the holidays can be very dangerous to our pets. Electric chords, deliveries, tree and home decorations, plants, candles, oils, etc. can ruin a holiday for our pets and us.

We are sharing some ideas that will keep your pets not only safer, but calmer as well when the 'normal craziness' of the holidays are upon us.

### ON THE HOMEFRONT

- Deliveries start early especially when we can order almost anything online now. These extra deliveries can wreak havoc on our pets, especially on dogs. Dogs are very in tune with their inner clocks and learn patterns quickly. While they may be used to the mailman delivering the mail every day, now there will be additional deliveries, and oftentimes that will include boxes being 'tossed' onto porches or decks.
- When hosting visitors, keep a leash and collar or harness securely on your pets, with ID tags showing your cell phone number. Be sure your pets are microchipped. Dogs can slip out the door in a heartbeat and be gone. Alternately, keep an exercise pen set up at the door so you can open the door, but your pets can't escape.
- Holiday plants can be very toxic to our pets. Please be aware of this when bringing plants into the home.
  - Traditional holiday plants like mistletoe and holly are toxic to dogs.
  - Poinsettias are not toxic, but any plant ingestions can lead to oral irritation, vomiting and/or diarrhea.
  - Keep pets away from the water base of your live tree.
- Inform your visitors ahead of time that you have pets.
- Though the excitement of a party may overwhelm some pets, keep your pets inside during cold weather and provide plenty of toys to keep them busy.

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- If needed, provide your cat or dog with a quiet room or crate during holiday parties and/or prepare ahead of time to discourage barking.
- As you count down to the new year, please keep in mind that strings of thrown confetti can get lodged in a cat's intestines, if ingested, perhaps necessitating surgery.
- Noisy poppers can terrify pets and cause possible damage to sensitive ears. And remember that many pets are also scared of fireworks, so be sure to secure them in a safe, escape-proof area as midnight approaches.
- Avoid using regular sidewalk salt and instead, use cat litter or pet-safe sidewalk salt products. Wash your pet's paws if they do track through salt that isn't pet-friendly.
- Ethylene glycol, antifreeze, is highly toxic to pets. It has a sweet taste and remains liquid when other water sources are frozen. Ingestion initially will mimic alcohol consumption, but quickly leads to irreversible and fatal kidney failure. Keep antifreeze wiped up and stored in covered containers. Suspected ingestion should require a trip to the veterinarian immediately.

## TRAVELING

- Make the decision EARLY if your pets will be traveling with you or you will need to board them.
  - Kennels and pet sitters fill up the fastest this time of year.
  - Wherever your pets spend the holidays, dogs and cats should all wear collars and tags with ID that offer a way to reach you.
- Use the appropriate safe carrier for your pet. It should be large enough for them to stand and turn around in.
- Ensure the hotel/Air B&B that you are staying in allows pets.
- Ensure all vaccinations are up to date on your pets. The last thing you want is a surprise at check in if your proof of vaccines are not up to date.